

**An Analysis of M. Quraish Shihab's Interpretation
Characteristics of Contemporary Islamic Legal Verses**

**Pembacaan terhadap Karakteristik Penafsiran M. Quraish
Shihab atas Ayat-Ayat Hukum Islam Kontemporer**



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Abstract

Background and Objectives: This study examines the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab in relation to the development of contemporary Islamic law. The study is motivated by the limitations of previous research, which has tended to examine legal verses only partially by focusing on a single theme, a specific verse, or through a comparative approach with other tafsirs. Studies that comprehensively connect the interpretation of legal verses with contemporary issues remain relatively limited. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* using a thematic (*maudū'ī*) and comprehensive approach by identifying relevant legal verses, classifying them based on legal themes, examining Quraish Shihab's interpretations within their textual and contextual dimensions, and synthesizing the findings to understand their contemporary relevance.

Methodology: This research employs a qualitative approach based on library research, using *Tafsir al-Mishbah* as the primary source supported by other relevant literature.

Main Results: The findings reveal that the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* does not stop at a purely normative meaning but is contextualized with the values of justice, public benefit, social responsibility, and the realities of Indonesian Muslim society. This approach demonstrates an effort to ensure that Islamic law remains relevant and applicable within modern social dynamics.

Contributions: The academic contribution of this research is the formulation of a comprehensive understanding of how *Tafsir al-Mishbah* reconstructs Islamic legal interpretation to remain adaptive and relevant to contemporary social realities.

Conclusions: The novelty of this research lies in its integrated thematic (*maudū'ī*) analysis of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, focusing not only on textual legal meanings but also on the ethical, social, and contextual dimensions emphasized by Quraish Shihab. Unlike previous studies that

generally examine legal verses partially or discuss *Tafsir al-Mishbah* descriptively, this study systematically identifies patterns of contextual interpretation across various legal themes.

Keywords: *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Legal Verses, Contemporary Islamic Law

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Abstrak

Latar Belakang dan Tujuan: Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh keterbatasan kajian sebelumnya yang cenderung hanya membahas ayat-ayat hukum secara parsial, baik melalui fokus pada satu tema tertentu, satu ayat spesifik, maupun pendekatan komparatif dengan tafsir lain. Kajian yang menghubungkan penafsiran ayat-ayat hukum secara komprehensif dengan isu-isu kontemporer masih relatif terbatas. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penafsiran ayat-ayat hukum dalam *Tafsir al-Mishbah* karya M. Quraish Shihab dalam kaitannya dengan perkembangan hukum Islam kontemporer secara tematik dan menyeluruh.

Metodologi: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan (*library research*) dengan menjadikan *Tafsir al-Mishbah* sebagai sumber utama yang didukung oleh berbagai literatur relevan lainnya. Ayat-ayat yang dianalisis meliputi QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33, QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 58, QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8,38,89, QS. *al-Hujurat* (49): 13, serta QS. *an-Naml* (27): 23, yang dianalisis secara tematik untuk menemukan pola penafsiran hukum yang dikembangkan.

Hasil Utama: Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penafsiran ayat-ayat hukum dalam *Tafsir al-Mishbah* tidak berhenti pada makna normatif semata, tetapi dikontekstualisasikan dengan nilai-nilai keadilan, kemaslahatan, tanggung jawab sosial, serta realitas masyarakat Muslim Indonesia. Pendekatan ini menunjukkan adanya upaya untuk menjadikan hukum Islam tetap relevan dan aplikatif dalam dinamika sosial modern.

Kontribusi: Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada analisis tematik yang terintegrasi terhadap sejumlah ayat hukum sehingga mampu mengungkap pola penafsiran yang berorientasi pada etika dan dimensi kemasyarakatan. Dengan demikian, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* memberikan kontribusi penting dalam pengembangan studi penafsiran hukum Islam yang kontekstual dan responsif terhadap kebutuhan masyarakat kontemporer.

Kesimpulan: Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penafsiran ayat-ayat hukum dalam *Tafsir al-Mishbah* tidak berhenti pada makna normatif semata, tapi dikontekstualisasikan dengan nilai-nilai keadilan, kemaslahatan, tanggung jawab, serta realitas masyarakat Muslim Indonesia. Pendekatan ini menunjukkan adanya upaya untuk menjadikan hukum Islam tetap relevan dan aplikatif dalam dinamika modern.

Kata kunci: *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Ayat-ayat Hukum, Hukum Islam Kontemporer

A. INTRODUCTION

The religious practices of Muslims in Indonesia, particularly in contemporary society, demonstrate increasing complexity and diversity in

responding to social and legal issues. One important manifestation of this development is the growing effort to understand and apply the legal verses of the Qur'an not only normatively, but also contextually in accordance with changing social realities (Fauzi, 2022). This shift raises an important academic question regarding how contemporary Qur'anic interpretation reconstructs Islamic legal understanding in order to remain relevant to modern societal challenges.

Among the most influential contemporary Qur'anic commentaries in Indonesia is *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab. This tafsir is widely recognized for presenting Qur'anic messages in a communicative, contextual, and socially responsive manner, particularly in interpreting verses related to Islamic law. Rather than emphasizing legal formalism alone, *Tafsir al-Misbah* integrates ethical values, justice, social welfare, and humanitarian considerations into its interpretation of legal verses (Munandar & Amin, 2023). However, despite its influence, scholarly discussion regarding the methodological pattern of legal interpretation in *Tafsir al-Misbah* remains limited and fragmented.

Previous studies generally examine legal verses in *Tafsir al-Misbah* partially by focusing on specific issues such as justice, gender, leadership, criminal law, or social ethics, while several thematic studies tend to discuss isolated themes without systematically identifying the broader interpretive framework employed by Quraish Shihab. Consequently, existing studies have not sufficiently explained how *Tafsir al-Misbah* constructs a comprehensive and contextual approach to Qur'anic legal interpretation across multiple legal themes. This limitation indicates a research gap concerning the need for a more systematic thematic analysis capable of connecting various legal verses within a unified interpretive framework.

Different from previous thematic studies, this research does not merely collect verses based on a single legal topic, but analyzes the interpretive pattern underlying various categories of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Misbah*. The thematic (*mauḍū'ī*) approach employed in this study is conducted through several methodological stages: identifying legal verses related to justice, rights, punishment, social equality, trust, and leadership; classifying the verses according to broader legal and ethical themes; analyzing Quraish Shihab's interpretations textually and contextually; and

synthesizing the findings to formulate the characteristics of his contemporary legal interpretation.

The selection of verses in this study is based on thematic relevance to Islamic legal and social issues discussed in *Tafsir al-Misbah*. Therefore, the selected verses include QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33 concerning the protection of life, QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 58 regarding trust and justice, QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 38 on theft sanctions, QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 89 concerning ethical responsibility in oath violations, QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8 on justice, *al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 13 on equality and social relations, and QS. *an-Naml* (27): 23 related to leadership and public authority. These verses were selected because they represent major dimensions of Islamic legal discourse that are interpreted contextually by Quraish Shihab and remain relevant to contemporary Indonesian society. To address this gap, this study aims to analyze the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Misbah* through a systematic thematic approach in order to identify the characteristics, patterns, and contemporary relevance of Quraish Shihab's legal interpretation.

The present study examines the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Misbah* more integrally, emphasizing fundamental Islamic legal principles such as justice, protection of life, trust, equality, and social welfare. These principles serve as the basis for contextual interpretation suitable for contemporary Indonesian Muslim society. This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research model. The primary source of this study is *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab. This research specifically focuses on analyzing Quraish Shihab's interpretive style in understanding Qur'anic legal verses through a thematic approach. The selected verses include QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33, QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 58, QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8,38,89, QS. *al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 13, and QS. *an-Naml* (27): 23, which were chosen based on their relevance to major themes of Islamic law such as justice, punishment, social equality, trust, and leadership. The study applies thematic analysis by classifying the verses according to their legal themes, examining Quraish Shihab's interpretations textually and contextually, and identifying the interpretive patterns that characterize his contemporary approach to Islamic legal discourse in Indonesia. By employing this approach, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic law, particularly in interpreting legal

verses in a contextual and applicable manner within the dynamics of modern society.

B. Results and Discussion

1. Biography, characteristics of *Tafsir Mishbah*

M. Quraish Shihab is one of Indonesia's prominent contemporary Qur'anic scholars whose intellectual and socio-cultural background significantly influences his interpretive approach in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. His academic formation at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, exposed him to classical Islamic scholarship while also introducing him to modern approaches in Qur'anic interpretation. This educational background contributes to his moderate and contextual understanding of Islamic teachings, particularly in interpreting legal verses. In addition, Quraish Shihab's engagement with Indonesia's pluralistic social environment shapes his tendency to emphasize values such as justice, social harmony, public welfare, and ethical responsibility in interpreting Qur'anic legal discourse. Rather than approaching legal verses solely through rigid normative formulations, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* frequently relates Qur'anic law to contemporary social realities and humanitarian considerations.

Within this study, the biographical background of Quraish Shihab is not presented merely descriptively, but functions as a supporting analytical lens to explain the interpretive patterns identified in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*. His intellectual training, socio-cultural experiences, and engagement with contemporary Indonesian society help explain why his interpretation of legal verses tends to be contextual, moderate, and socially oriented. Since 2004, Quraish Shihab has realized his idea of "Grounding the Qur'an" through the establishment of the Center for Qur'anic Studies (PSQ). Through this institution, he promotes the integration of Qur'anic values into daily life while emphasizing a moderate and tolerant understanding of Islam in a diverse society. This commitment is also reflected in his monumental work, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* and numerous other writings that contribute to presenting a contextual and relevant understanding of the Qur'an to the wider community (Huda et al., 2020).

The development of Muhammad Quraish Shihab's thinking has been dynamic throughout his intellectual journey. From a young age, he has

shown a tendency to be a thinker through his work *Al-Khawatir*, which discusses the relationship between revelation and reason. The academic tradition of Al-Azhar University in Egypt, which emphasizes a thematic and socio-cultural approach to interpretation, has also shaped his style of interpretation. Therefore, Quraish Shihab's interpretive thinking cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context, as seen in *Tafsir al-Misbah*, which was compiled in a specific social space and situation. Quraish Shihab's efforts to adapt his interpretation to the needs of society show that social and cultural dynamics play an important role in shaping and directing the development of his interpretive style. M. Quraish Shihab's academic success was strongly influenced by his family background, particularly his father, Abdurrahman Shihab, a professor and scholar of tafsir. This educational environment helped shape his strong intellectual capacity in Qur'anic studies. According to Howard M. Federspiel, this background made Quraish Shihab one of the most educated figures in the tradition of popular Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, reflecting his significant role in the development of Indonesian tafsir studies (Howard M. Federspiel, 1996).

Muhammad Quraish Shihab is active academically and has produced numerous significant works in Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic studies, including *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, *Tafsir al-Munir*, *Philosophy of Islamic Law*, *Grounding the Qur'an*, and many others addressing Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic law, and moral guidance. This study focuses on *Tafsir al-Misbah*, known for its clear language and relevance to modern societal realities. *Tafsir al-Mishbah* was born out of Quraish Shihab's motivation to present a complete and easy-to-understand interpretation of the Qur'an to the public. This work is also intended as an effort to continue the tradition of interpretation by Nusantara scholars, such as Nawawi al-Bantani and Hamka, thereby making an important contribution to the development of interpretation studies in Indonesia. The writing of *Tafsir al-Misbah* began on June 18, 1999, when Quraish Shihab was serving as the Indonesian Ambassador to Cairo, and was completed on September 5, 2003, in Jakarta, with the writing process taking around four years through consistent dedication of time (Amnesti, 2021).

The mention of *al-Miṣbāh* in M. Quraish Shihab's tafsir book has a symbolic meaning as a lamp that gives light. Through this name, this tafsir is expected to be a means of enlightenment for Muslims, especially in helping them digest the contents of the Qur'an and make it a guide for life. *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, published by Lentera Hati, consists of 15 volumes containing all 30 *juz* of the Qur'an in accordance with the order of the mushaf. Each volume discusses a series of surahs in sequence, starting from al-Fatihah to an-Nas. With its systematic arrangement and comprehensive coverage, Tafsir al-Misbah not only interprets all the verses of the Qur'an, but also presents structured, consistent, and in-depth discussions, making it one of the monumental works of tafsir in Indonesia (Saifuddin, 2016).

Tafsir al-Mishbah was compiled using the taḥlīlī method of interpretation, which is an analytical interpretation that follows the order of the surahs and verses in the mushaf. The interpretation is comprehensive, examining linguistic aspects such as structure and style, as well as aspects of meaning including the purpose of the verse, legal content, creed, moral values, commands and prohibitions, interrelationships between verses, and the wisdom contained therein. (Shihab, 2006). In terms of style, Tafsir al-Misbah uses a literary-cultural and social approach. This approach interprets the verses of the Qur'an in communicative and easy-to-understand language, while linking them to the social and cultural realities of society. This style reflects the character of modern tafsir, which emphasizes not only linguistic aspects, but also relevance to the practice of the teachings of the Qur'an in everyday life (Lufaei, 2019).

2. Quraish Shihab's Interpretation in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*

a. QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8

Through a thematic analysis of QS. al-Mā'idah 8 and its relation to other Qur'anic verses concerning justice, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* positions justice as a universal principle that must be upheld even toward those who are disliked. This interpretation is reinforced by Quraish Shihab's emphasis on the ethical and social dimensions of justice within contemporary society.

The following is the verse and its interpretation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ إِعْدِلُوا ۗ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who believe! Be upholders of justice for Allah, (when) acting as witnesses with fairness. And let not your hatred for a people incite you to act unjustly. Be just, for justice is closer to piety. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019)

In QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8, Allah commands believers to always stand on the principle of justice solely for His sake. The justice referred to is not limited to the legal realm, but also encompasses all dimensions of life, including social, political, and moral values. This verse emphasizes that hatred towards a group should not be a reason to commit injustice or ignore the truth. On the contrary, a Muslim is required to remain fair even towards those he dislikes, because fairness is a characteristic that is closest to piety. By upholding justice, a servant not only creates balance in society, but also shows his obedience and devotion to Allah. The end of this verse emphasizes that Allah always watches over every human deed, so that everyone is required to safeguard the trust, uphold the truth, and make justice the basis for decision-making. In Tafsir al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab emphasizes this verse to call on believers to consistently uphold trust and justice solely for the sake of Allah. Fairness must be upheld towards everyone without being influenced by hatred or personal interests, because justice is the path closest to piety. Quraish Shihab also revealed that there is a correlation between the above verse and another verse in QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 135, which this is read *kūnū qawwāmīna bil qisṭi syuhadā' lillāhi*. Here, it has the same redaction as the verse in QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8, which it is reads *kūnū qawwāmīna lillāhi syuhadā'a bil qisṭi*.

The difference in wording is most likely related to the fact that the word "*mā'idah*" is not mentioned in the previous verse. The difference in wording is most likely related to the context in which the verse appears in Surah an-Nisa'. The verse appears in a situation that touches on legal issues in court, where there was a case of a Muslim who falsely accused a Jew. After that, the discussion continues with the issue of the bond between men and women. Therefore, the main point emphasized in this verse is the necessity of upholding justice, followed by the command to bear witness. Therefore, in its composition, the word *al-qisṭ* (justice) is placed before the

word *syuhadā'* (witnesses). Meanwhile, in the verse of *al-Mā'idah*, what is discussed is a condition of hostility and hatred, so it is more appropriate if the command to uphold everything for the sake of Allah is mentioned first. In addition, it is emphasized that justice is the path that is closer to piety.

In Islamic teachings, justice occupies a central position as a key principle. Compassion, both in personal and social spheres, can lead to inequality if it is not applied proportionally. Excessive compassion, for example, has the potential to hinder the enforcement of law against offenders. Justice means putting everything in its proper place, giving compassion to those who deserve it, while responding to violations with appropriate sanctions (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016a).

b. QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 58

Through a thematic analysis of QS. *an-Nisā'* 58 and its relationship with other Qur'anic verses concerning justice and responsibility, Tafsir al-Misbah interprets trust (*amanah*) and justice as fundamental principles in social and legal life. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that authority and responsibility must be exercised honestly, fairly, and for the public good rather than for personal or group interests. This interpretation reflects the ethical and social dimensions of Islamic law, in which justice functions as a universal principle guiding decision-making and social relations in contemporary society (Amiruddin, 2021).

Here are the verses and their interpretations:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا ۝ بَصِيرًا

Indeed, Allah commands you to convey the trust to those who are entitled to receive it, and when you judge between people, judge with justice. Indeed, Allah is the best teacher for you. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

The explanation in Tafsir al-Mishbah indicates that this verse contains a strong call to carry out the *Amanah* as decreed by Allah. This call also serves as a warning to Muslims not to repeat the mistakes of the Jews who neglected the *amanah* entrusted to them by Allah, especially in terms of conveying and practicing the teachings of the holy book. This trust includes the obligation to convey the truth of revelation and to practice it consistently, without concealing any part of its contents for certain interests.

This verse emphasizes Allah's command directly by mentioning His name, which indicates the importance of trust and justice as guidelines for life. Allah, who is Perfect and Holy, commands that every trust be conveyed to the rightful party in an appropriate and responsible manner, whether it is a trust that comes from Allah or a trust that arises from human relationships. In addition, Allah also commands that every legal decision concerning human affairs be enforced on the basis of justice, without being influenced by partiality, personal interests, or group ties.

In this context, it is not permissible to treat others unjustly, even those who are considered enemies, nor is it permissible to defend one's own side when they are in the wrong. Through this commandment, Allah provides the best guidance for humans in managing social life and law. Therefore, every believer is required to strive earnestly to fulfill their duties and uphold justice, with the awareness that Allah is always watching, hearing every word, and knowing all deeds, both those that are visible and those that are hidden in the hearts of humans (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016a).

c. QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33

Through a thematic analysis of QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33 and its relationship with other Qur'anic verses concerning the protection of life and justice, Tafsir al-Misbah interprets the prohibition of murder as a fundamental principle of Islamic law aimed at safeguarding human life. Quraish Shihab explains that the verse not only strictly forbids unlawful killing, but also regulates the rights of the victim's family to seek qishash or diyat within the boundaries of justice and proportionality. His interpretation emphasizes that the implementation of legal sanctions must avoid excessiveness and revenge, reflecting the ethical, humanitarian, and social dimensions of Islamic law in maintaining justice and social order (Nilam Sari, 2020):

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ
إِنَّهٗ كَانَ مَنصُورًا

And do not kill anyone whom Allah has forbidden to be killed except for a just cause. And whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in killing. Indeed, he is one who has been given victory. (RI, 2009)

The above verse emphasizes the prohibition of taking life, whether of others or oneself, except in circumstances that are permissible according to religion. If someone loses their life as a result of an unjust act, Allah gives their heirs the authority to demand qishash or diyat through a competent judge. However, the claim must be proportional; it is not permissible to act arbitrarily, let alone exceed the limits by killing someone who is not the perpetrator or demanding more than one life.

The redaction *taqtulū an-nafsa* in QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33 means to kill a soul, in the sense of killing one's own soul or that of another person, whereas in the redaction *allatī ḥarramallāh illā bil haqqi*, which Allah has forbidden except with haq, excludes some killings. According to Sayyid Quṭub, there are three conditions that allow the taking of life. First, through the mechanism of qishash for perpetrators of murder. Second, as an effort to prevent moral damage arising from adultery. Third, against people who apostatize after voluntarily converting to Islam, because leaving the religion is considered to pose a potential threat to the security of the ummah. However, if someone has never embraced Islam from the beginning, then they are not subject to punishment and remain under protection.

Quraish Shihab also mentioned the existence of *munasābatul ayah* in QS. *al-Baqarah* (2): 178 regarding the reason Islam allows the implementation of *qīṣāṣ* against perpetrators of murder. According to this verse, *qīṣāṣ* is permitted as a form of justice, as well as to prevent prolonged grudges in society. This rule also contains mercy and leniency, because the victim's family is given the choice to forgive and replace it with ransom or in arabic named by *diāt*. Thus, *qīṣāṣ* is not merely revenge, but a sharia mechanism to maintain social stability and humanity. The redaction *innahu kāna manṣūrān* can be understood as a form of victory, both for the victim who was killed because God upheld justice for him, and for the victim's family who were given the right to demand qishash or receive diyat as compensation (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016b).

d. QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5):38

Through a thematic analysis of QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5):38 and its relationship with other Qur'anic verses concerning justice, punishment, and social welfare, Tafsir al-Misbah interprets the law of theft within a broader

ethical and social framework. Quraish Shihab explains that the legal sanction for theft is not merely retributive, but aims to uphold justice, protect property rights, maintain social order, and encourage moral responsibility within society. His interpretation emphasizes that the implementation of punishment must consider humanitarian and social dimensions, reflecting the contextual and ethical approach of Islamic law in addressing contemporary social problems (R. T. A. Putri & Rahmi, 2023). Here are the verses and their interpretations:

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands as punishment for what they have done and as a punishment from Allah. And Allah is Almighty and Wise.

M. Quraish Shihab explains that Qur'anic theft laws apply to all, with hand-cutting as a preventive measure to uphold justice. Repentance and restitution can lead to forgiveness. The term *syāriq* may imply habitual thieves, but the official translation and most scholars hold that anyone proven to steal, even once, is subject to the law, highlighting theft as a serious violation of others' rights and social order. Within the framework of this discussion, Imam al-Ghazali's view of Allah's nature as al-Ghaffār provides an ethical dimension that complements the normative aspects of law. According to him, Allah is willing to cover the mistakes of His servants and grant forgiveness if a person immediately realizes their mistake, stops sinning, and strives to improve themselves. However, when violations are committed repeatedly and accompanied by an attitude of belittling sin, including in cases of theft, this protection can be revoked, so that mistakes that were originally covered up become apparent and lead to legal consequences.

This view is reinforced by a narration attributed to Sayyidinā 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, which shows that the perpetrator's confession that he has only stolen once cannot always be used as a measure of truth. Therefore, the wording of the verse still refers to the perpetrator as a thief even if it is their first time being caught by the law. This emphasizes that the application of sanctions is not merely repressive in nature, but serves as an instrument to uphold justice and ensure that social order is maintained (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016b).

e. QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 89

Through a thematic analysis of QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 89 and its relationship with other Qur'anic verses concerning responsibility, ethics, and legal accountability, Tafsir al-Misbah interprets *kaffārah* as a mechanism of moral and social responsibility for individuals who deliberately violate their oaths. Quraish Shihab explains that the verse distinguishes between unintentional statements and deliberate oaths, emphasizing that legal and moral consequences arise only when an oath is consciously intended and subsequently broken. His interpretation highlights that *kaffārah* is not merely punitive, but functions as an ethical form of self-correction aimed at maintaining honesty, responsibility, and social harmony. By relating this verse to broader Qur'anic principles of accountability and compassion, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* presents Islamic law as a balanced system that integrates legal obligations with ethical and humanitarian values (Ghazi ASSI, 2022). Here are the verses and their interpretations:

يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّعْنَةِ فِيْ أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَمَدْتُمْ الْإِيمَانَ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ
مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ
وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

Allah does not punish you for your unintentional oaths, but He punishes you for your deliberate oaths. The expiation for breaking such an oath is to feed ten poor people with the food you normally feed your family, or to clothe them, or to free a slave. Whoever cannot do so must fast for three days. That is the expiation for your oaths when you swear (and break them). And keep your oaths. Thus does God explain His laws to you so that you may be grateful (to Him) (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019)

In *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, this verse addresses oaths. Words mentioning Allah without intent are not binding, but intentional oaths must be fulfilled. If broken, *kaffārah* is required: feeding ten poor people, providing suitable clothing, freeing a capable Muslim slave, or fasting three days if the first options are not possible. The verse teaches care in making oaths and fulfilling them, while ensuring atonement if broken. According to Imam Syāfi'ī, the word *yu'akhizukum* means that *kaffārah* is obligatory to pay, while other scholars interpret it to mean that everyone will be punished later. As for the word *awsaṭ*, most scholars interpret it as "food that is normally consumed daily," not luxury food. Some interpret it as the best

food, and linguistically this is possible, but the first opinion is considered stronger. This is in accordance with the principle of moderation in Islamic teachings, where virtue always lies in the middle between two extremes. Generosity, for example, lies between stinginess and extravagance; likewise, courage lies between excessive fear and recklessness. What is meant by feeding in the context of *kaffārah* is providing the poor with the means to meet their food needs. The Mālikī and Syāfi'ī schools of thought argue that what is given is food so that it can be used according to the needs of the recipient.

Meanwhile, *Hanafi* school of thought permits giving gifts in the form of lunch or dinner, and even inviting one person for ten consecutive days is considered valid. Regarding the three days of fasting, Imam Syāfi'ī and Imam Mālik argue that it is not obligatory to fast consecutively because there is no provision requiring this; even *qada'* of *Ramaḍan* fasting is not required to be consecutive. In contrast, *Hanafi* and *Aḥmadi* schools of thought require that it be performed consecutively based on the narration that reads the verse with the phrase “three consecutive days” and is supported by the hadith narrated by Ibn Mardawaih.

As for false oaths, they are not included in the scope of this verse because they are not sincerely intended, so they do not give rise to the obligation of *kaffarah* and are considered a form of lying. However, Imam Syāfi'ī has a different view. According to him, a false oath is still classified as an oath because the speaker uses the name of Allah as a form of affirmation. Therefore, he is still obliged to pay *kaffarah*, even though the sin of his lie remains attached. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016b)

f. QS. *al-Hujurāt* (49): 13

Through a thematic analysis of QS. *al-Hujurāt* (49): 13 and its relationship with other Qur'anic verses concerning equality, humanity, and social relations, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* interprets human diversity as part of God's design intended to encourage mutual understanding and cooperation among people. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that all humans originate from the same source; therefore, superiority cannot be based on lineage, ethnicity, tribe, or social status. Instead, true dignity before God is determined by moral and spiritual piety. His interpretation highlights the

ethical and social dimensions of the verse by promoting justice, equality, and harmonious social interaction within pluralistic society. By connecting this verse to broader Qur'anic principles of humanity and social ethics, Tafsir al-Misbah presents equality as a universal value that remains relevant to contemporary social life (Ismail & Younis, 2023). Here are the verses and their interpretations:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

M. Quraish Shihab interprets this verse as an affirmation of the unity of human origins, which began with one human couple. Moreover, this verse rejects the notion that nobility is determined by biological or social factors, such as lineage, tribal affiliation, or gender differences. The main measure of human dignity, according to this verse, is the quality of one's piety to Allah SWT. The beginning of the verse, which reads, "Indeed, We created you from a male and a female," serves as an affirmation that all humans have the same degree of humanity before Allah. There is no difference in value between one tribe and another, nor between men and women, because they all come from the same origin of creation. This introduction then leads to the conclusion found in the last part of the verse, which is "Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious." Therefore, true nobility is not determined by origin or gender, but by the level of piety that a person has towards Allah SWT.

In this context, during the *Hajj Wada'* event, the Prophet delivered a fundamental message addressed to all of humanity. In his sermon, he emphasized the principle of universal monotheism, that God is one for all human beings, and stressed the unity of human origins, which stem from one father. Furthermore, the Prophet eliminated all forms of privilege based on ethnic identity, race, or skin color. There is no superiority of any particular group, whether Arab or non-Arab, black or white, except that which is based on piety to Allah. As he said: "O mankind, indeed your God is One and your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-

Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a black person over a red person, nor of a red person over a black person, except by piety. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious." (HR. Al-Baihaqī from Jābir bin Abdillāh)(M. Quraish Shihab, 2016a).

g. QS. an-Naml (27): 23

QS. *an-Naml* (27): 23 illustrates female leadership, showing that effective governance depends on ability, legitimate authority, and adequate resources, not gender.(Abbas & Rawabdeh, 2022). Here are the verses and their interpretations:

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ

Indeed, I found a woman ruling over them (the people of Sheba). She was given everything and had a great throne.

In the explanation in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* book, namely in the passage of the verse, "Indeed, I found a woman, namely Balqis bint Syurahil, who held the leadership of the land of *Saba'*. She had been blessed with various advantages and had a magnificent throne." The kingdom of Sheba was located in Yemen, South Arabia, and was known since the 8th century BC as a kingdom with an advanced civilization. One of its rulers was Queen Balqis, who lived during the time of Prophet Solomon. Yemen itself is also known as al-'Arab as-Sa'idah or "The Happy Arab Land." In the Qur'an, the country is described as "*baldatun tayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr,*" a region that lives in prosperity and is under the grace of the Most Forgiving God.

In Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretation, it is discussed that the hoopoe found a woman from the royal family who led her people. The woman had around 312 council members, and each council leader oversaw around 10,000 people. The kingdom was located in the Ma'rib region, about three miles from the city of Shan'a. Queen Balqis was blessed with a large and magnificent throne, decorated with gold, pearls, and various types of gems. Historians mention that the throne was located in a spacious, sparkling, and towering palace. Inside the palace, there were about 360 windows facing east and west. The building was designed so that sunlight could enter every morning and evening. At those times, the kingdom's inhabitants would prostrate themselves to worship the sun.

The phrase *ūtiyat min kulli syaiin* or “she was given everything” is not meant to imply that she was given absolutely everything, but rather that Queen Balqis had everything she needed to make her reign strong, great, and long-lasting. For example, the country had fertile land, an obedient people, a strong military, and a solid government structure. The hoopoe did not explicitly mention the party who bestowed all these blessings, because it was understood that they all came from Allah. In addition, this also indicates that the power and prosperity of the kingdom of Sheba were the result of various causes and factors that Allah willed. Meanwhile, the mention of *'arsyun 'azīm* or “great throne” specifically indicates the splendor and greatness of the kingdom (D. N. Putri et al., 2024).

C. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the interpretation of legal verses in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* demonstrates a contextual and ethically oriented interpretive style in understanding Islamic law. Through a thematic analysis of selected legal verses, this research identifies a consistent interpretive pattern employed by Quraish Shihab, namely the integration of normative legal teachings with ethical, humanitarian, and social considerations relevant to contemporary society. The analysis of QS. *al-Isrā'* (17): 33 shows that the protection of life is interpreted not only as a legal prohibition against murder, but also as an effort to uphold justice and prevent excessive retaliation. In QS. *an-Nisā'* (4): 58 and QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 8, *Tafsir al-Mishbah* emphasizes justice and trust as universal principles that must guide leadership, governance, and social relations. Meanwhile, the interpretation of QS. *al-Mā'idah* (5): 38 and 89 demonstrates that legal sanctions and kaffarat are understood not merely as punitive mechanisms, but also as ethical instruments aimed at maintaining social order, responsibility, and public welfare. Furthermore, the analysis of QS. *al-Hujurat* (49): 13 and QS. *an-Naml* (27): 23 indicates that Quraish Shihab interprets equality and leadership within a moral and social framework that prioritizes piety, capability, and justice rather than ethnicity, gender, or social status. Based on these findings, this study argues that *Tafsir al-Mishbah* reconstructs the interpretation of Qur'anic legal verses through a contextual approach that connects Islamic law with contemporary social realities.

The contribution of this study lies in demonstrating systematically how Quraish Shihab's interpretive style integrates legal, ethical, and humanitarian dimensions within a thematic framework of Qur'anic interpretation. This research also contributes to the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies in Indonesia by showing that Islamic legal interpretation in *Tafsir al-Mishbah* remains relevant to discussions on justice, social responsibility, equality, and public welfare in modern Muslim society. This study recommends further research through comparative analysis between *Tafsir al-Misbah* and other classical or contemporary tafsir works in order to examine broader methodological developments in the interpretation of Qur'anic legal verses.

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